



# Program Dispatch

First Edition, Fiscal Year 2010-2011



## Psychiatric Triage Diversion Program

in partnership with  
**Arrowhead Regional Medical Center**

**Mental Health Services Act Dollars  
Working in the Community!**

### Service Goals

The objectives of psychiatric triage diversion are:

- **Screen and assess** individuals presenting to Arrowhead Regional Medical Center (ARMC) Psychiatric Triage to determine reason for Emergency Room visit.
- **Redirect clients** who need treatment to community-based services that appropriately meet their needs
- **Help prevent** unnecessary and/or inappropriate inpatient hospitalizations
- **Provide crisis** intervention services
- **Provide case management** services, community-based placements, advocacy services, linkage to treatment options, education and assistance with transportation services for community members

## Why was Psychiatric Triage Diversion Created?

Approximately 40% of individuals presenting to Arrowhead Regional Medical Center (ARMC) Psychiatric Triage Unit were in need of other services in addition to inpatient psychiatric treatment.

These needs included, but are not limited to:

- Prescription refills
- Housing assistance
- Substance abuse assistance
- Food assistance
- Domestic violence issues
- Social crisis
- Health care services
- Information regarding the availability of outpatient psychiatric care.

Overcrowding caused delays in admissions for individuals who were in need of acute psychiatric hospital admission. The Diversion Team was created to address and eliminate inappropriate and/or unnecessary admissions to the inpatient unit as well as provide a service option for the needs of individuals who do not need inpatient treatment.



## Positive Results

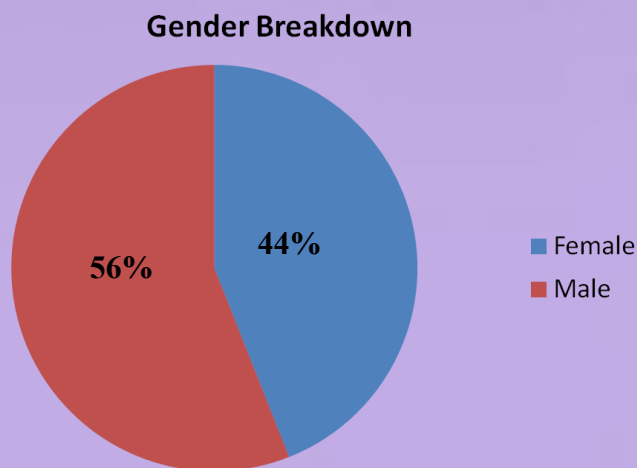
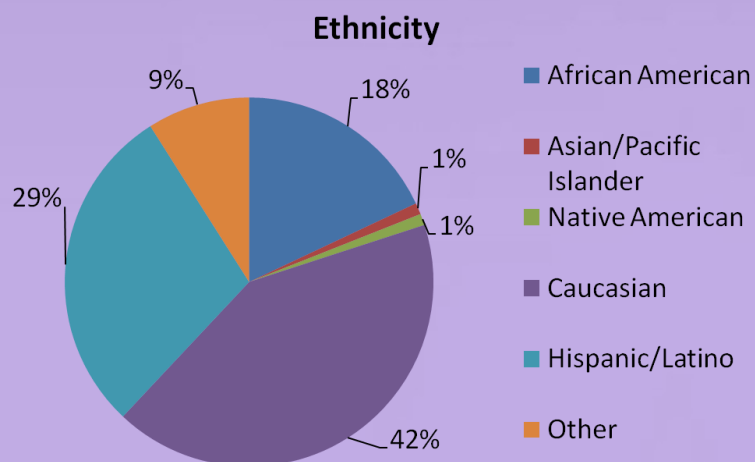
At the time of development of the Psychiatric Triage Diversion Program it was the goal of the program to see approximately **75 individuals** per month. **This number was reached within the first month of operation.**

The program sees as many as **450 individuals a month, nearly 5,000 a year.** An average of **70%** of those individuals are successfully diverted each month to community-based, outpatient programs.

This has reduced crowding at the ARMC Psychiatric Triage Unit providing a safer environment for both the community and staff and better health care for our community members.

Additionally, at the time of development of the program approximately **40%** of all community members who were admitted to the hospital were transferred to alternate hospitals due to overcrowding at ARMC. That number has been **reduced to less than 10%**, enabling our clients to be hospitalized closer to home.

## Program Data



Beginning with fiscal year 2007-2008 through June 2011, a total of **11,562 unduplicated clients were served.**

Of those clients :

- **70%** were successfully diverted to community-based, outpatient care
- **66%** were uninsured
- **10%** were recently incarcerated
- **31%** had co-occurring disorders
- **16%** were homeless

## Making A Difference

A young couple presented to the Psychiatric Triage Unit with the young woman, 7-months pregnant, complaining of debilitating anxiety and unrelenting panic attacks. She sat curled in a ball, shaking during the interview. She had been using marijuana to cope with the panic attacks. The couple was referred to the Rialto Crisis Walk-In Clinic for immediate medication management. They were also referred to the Rialto Perinatal clinic for help with her marijuana use. Three months later the young man stopped in to let us know that they were doing well. The panic attacks were under control, the young woman had stopped using marijuana and was in therapy and they had delivered a 7-pound, healthy, baby boy.



## Challenges

- The first challenge faced by the program was the unexpected demand for program services.
- The second major challenge was the need to develop and maintain a strong and effective partnership with Arrowhead Regional Medical Center (ARMC), the sister agency. The Diversion program was a new and unique concept to the hospital environment; thus, a team approach had to be formulated to ensure success.



*"I didn't want to be in the hospital, but I didn't know where else to come for help. I'm glad you guys were here." - Client Comment*

## Solutions in Progress

- In order to provide services for longer hours each day, flexible scheduling was utilized.
- Recruitment of suitable staff is ongoing. The unusual hours and flexible scheduling has allowed the program to attract and include graduate students, interns and employees, who are willing to work evening and weekend shifts in order to accommodate school schedules. Their increased knowledge continues to be an asset to the program.
- Successful implementation and positive outcomes have further strengthened a commitment by the Department of Behavioral Health and ARMC to work collaboratively for the benefit of our community members. The positive results and ability to consistently provide high quality services have helped staff to better understand the value of the program.

### Collaborative Partners

The primary partnering program is Arrowhead Regional Medical Center. The Diversion Unit functions within its Behavioral Health Unit. ARMC's support and willingness to forge a strong team approach have been essential to the success of the program.

**For information regarding services please call:**

**ACCESS UNIT**

(888) 743-1478 or (888) 743-1481 (TTY)

Dial 2-1-1 to get information and referrals for health and social services.  
Get connected with a live operator 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.